With the intolerance of a devotee urging the glad tidings of a new evangel, M. Ribot, on behalf of the French Government, urged that we should there and then, without consulting flesh and blood in the shape of military advisers, decide the issues which had been raised in the correspondence between the two Commanders-in-chief. We, however, insisted upon an opportunity being afforded us for consultation with Sir Douglas Haig. At one of the sittings of the Conference I said that I agreed that the question was very urgent. But General Nivelle had only been in command of the French Armies for a fortnight. The first that His Majesty's Government had heard of this new scheme was on the previous day. It meant a tremendous change in the plan of operations, and His Majesty's Government must really consult not only General Robertson, but also their General in the Field, Sir Douglas Haig. The Cabinet considered that the question must be left for a short time to see whether Sir Douglas Haig and General Nivelle could not arrive at a decision. It looked as if they could, but if that failed, the French Government should then approach His Majesty's Government, who quite agreed as to the necessity of very early decision and action.

Ribot urges the plan

insist on

After a good deal of further unreasonable insistence on the part of the French delegates, I replied that I did not think that M. Ribot would ask His Majesty's Government

No opposition

to overrule
from C.I.G.S. their General Commanding-in-
Chief with-
out at least hearing what he had to say.
The Cabinet were sympathetic, but they
must first
hear Sir Douglas Haig. cc *There was no*
opposition from